

Sacramento mayor to roll out green carpet for S.F. Mayor Newsom

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It's a mayor-to-mayor meeting and the topic is green.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom rolls into town today as the guest of Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, who's hosting his monthly "Greenwise" gathering. Johnson invited his Bay Area colleague, who leads a city often touted as one of the greenest in the nation, to outline San Francisco's green-tech initiatives.

Newsom's environmental policies have helped the city sharply reduce its carbon footprint, attract clean-tech companies and add green jobs.

"We grew our economy and advanced our environmental sustainability," Newsom said by telephone Monday. He became mayor in 2003.

Newsom, the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor, will discuss San Francisco's green achievements at today's "Greenwise" gathering.

While many argue that climate change policies will harm the economy, Newsom says such programs have helped San Francisco.

He cited a recent study by MonsterTrack.com that says San Francisco, with a population of 800,000-plus, leads the state with more than 42,000 clean-tech jobs.

During the past year, the city has lured 10 major employers to open their North American headquarters in the San Francisco area. They include Suntech Power Holdings Co. of China, which is one of the world's largest solar power manufacturing firms.

Newsom said San Francisco benefited by forging partnerships between the private and public sectors and by developing alliances with other local governments in the region.

He believes that Sacramento, by following a similar strategy, could see a similar benefit.

In his telephone interview, Newsom also was critical of a November ballot initiative to roll back the state's landmark greenhouse gas law, which aims to reduce carbon emissions 15 percent statewide by 2020.

He argued that the rollback initiative, Proposition 23, would destroy one of the few sectors in California's economy that is adding jobs.

"The only area of any growth in this economy has been in the green-tech sector," he said.

Newsom's talk, which is open to the public, will be held at California State University, Sacramento, in the University Union ballroom at 11 a.m.

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